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TESTIMONY ON SB 271 – MARCH 13, 2009

My name is Carol McEvoy. I hold an MS in Biochemistry and an MA in Marriage, Family and Child Therapy. I have been in private practice in Marriage and Family Therapy in Montana for the past 20 years. I was a founder of Hospice Care here in Montana in 1976 and received the Jefferson Award for doing so. I served on a Hospice staff for 6 years, from 1986-1992, tending to the needs of the dying and their families. I presently serve as Executive Director for the Rim Country Land Institute, an educational and research organization that provides placed-based programs in both Billings and Helena.

I present my background so you might understand why I am in favor of SB 271. I have had occasion to interact with varied groups of Montanans and their families for the past 33 years in supportive, educational and therapeutic settings. Throughout these years, I have made two very practical and major observations:

- 1) Persons trained in Marriage and Family techniques have, by their extensive and comprehensive course work, a unique approach to interaction with and treatment of both individuals and groups. This uniqueness is noticed by clientele who have commented how different this approach is from other therapies and modes of interaction.
- 2) Training in family systems work provides for interventions that are focused, efficient and can provide measurable outcomes in a reasonable length of time, allowing clients and

client groups to get on with the business of living out their lives, most of the time in a matter of months, not years. Many clients over the years, have noted this difference in duration of care. Hospice patients, with the external limits of their illnesses, taught me first hand, the importance of such time frames. It was my experience with them that moved me to pursue four years of training in Marriage and Family Therapy.

I wish to make very clear, my concern here today. I am near the end of my career as a therapist so there is nothing self-serving about my backing of this bill. I am concerned that the public be served well by having clarity and knowledge about the specialized and specific training and experience of those they employ so they can make informed choices about their care and be assured they will receive what they are paying for when they seek professional family therapy.

I firmly believe that such clarity and knowledge will be available to the public only through MFT licensure and the resultant protection it can provide.

Thank you for your attention.